



# Montgomery County Council

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Montgomery Council Applauds \$1 Million MDOT Grant for Downcounty Bikeshare**

*Along With State Bond and Private Funding, Grant Will Help  
Establish Program With 50 Docking Stations and 350 Bikes*

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ROCKVILLE, Md., May 4, 2012—The Montgomery County Council lauded the announcement this week that the Maryland Department of Transportation has awarded the Montgomery County's Department of Transportation (MCDOT) a \$1,008,000 grant for a proposed bikeshare program for the downcounty areas of Friendship Heights, Bethesda, Medical Center, Takoma Park and Silver Spring.

In addition to the grant, during its regular session, the Maryland General Assembly approved a bill that will provide a \$250,000 bond to the bikeshare program. The grant and bond will help pay for a portion of the construction and equipment costs for 50 bike share docking stations and 350 bikes. Montgomery County also has received \$252,000 in private sector funding commitments toward the cost of bikeshare stations in the downcounty area, pending assurance that the bikeshare network will be established.

The downcounty bikeshare program would build on the success of the Capital Bikeshare program in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, which, in its first 18 months, logged more than 1.5 million bike trips. The downcounty system is expected to expand the reach of Metrorail and other transit; provide low-cost transportation options in the most urbanized and congested portion of Montgomery County; help get people out of their cars for short trips; and produce environmental benefits while enhancing economic activity.

Councilmember Valerie Ervin initially proposed the creation of a bikeshare program in 2008. Over the past two years, Councilmember Ervin has met with U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, members of the State Delegation to the General Assembly and County Department of

Transportation staff to secure federal funding for Montgomery's plan. In addition, in September 2010 she and Councilmember George Leventhal wrote to the Maryland Department of Transportation to keep momentum going toward establishing a bikeshare program.

"The Bikeshare Program and expanding interconnected bike routes have been at the top of my legislative agenda since joining the Council," said Councilmember Ervin, who represents the East County, which includes Silver Spring and Takoma Park. "I am so excited to have the resources necessary to finally green-light this project downcounty.

"Our County is committed to expanding low-cost transportation options through reliable transit and facilities to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to travel in a safe, reliable and convenient way," said Councilmember Ervin. "I want to thank our federal and state representatives, as well as our Department of Transportation, for making this program a reality."

As chair of the Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (T and E) Committee, Council President Roger Berliner also has assumed a significant leadership role on bringing the sturdy red bikes to Montgomery County. He has convened worksessions of the T and E Committee with County stakeholders to discuss ambitious, concrete steps necessary to implement a bikeshare network expeditiously.

Recognizing the important role that public-private partnerships will play in complementing other funding, Council President Berliner also convened a group of stakeholders from the development community to explore the creative ways the private sector can participate in bikeshare, eventually securing meaningful commitments that will assist in funding the network.

"Having bikeshare in Montgomery County is a tremendous plus for residents and our environment," said Council President Berliner. "The state's strong support for the downcounty bikeshare system affirms the broad interest in getting a network up and running by the end of the year. I am very pleased that this critical piece of funding has fallen into place and I thank Governor O'Malley and our partners in the General Assembly for their support."

Last year, Montgomery County received funding for 20 bikeshare stations and 200 bikes in the Rockville and Shady Grove/Life Sciences Center area through a Federal Transit Administration Job Access Reverse Commute Grant to serve low income reverse commuters and job trainees. The Rockville/Shady Grove/Life Sciences Center and downcounty bikeshare programs together will foster bikeshare/transit connections for residents and employees traveling between downcounty and upcounty and improve access to Metrorail, MARC and MTA bus services.

"It's a great day for cyclists in Montgomery County," said Councilmember Nancy Floreen. "I'm delighted that the State of Maryland is helping us to create more and better transportation options. The downcounty bikeshare program will be a convenient

way for residents to take short trips and will provide environmental benefits with fewer cars on the road.”

Bikesharing provides short-term bicycle rentals at self-service, automated, solar-powered docking stations sited at publicly accessible locations. Bikes may be picked up at one location and returned to another, creating a system that allows for one-way trips. Bikeshare is considered ideal for short trips of less than five miles. Trips under 30 minutes are included in the membership fee, while longer trips are charged based on their duration.

“This is a big step forward for giving residents convenient biking options in our County,” said Councilmember Hans Riemer.

It is estimated that about \$500,000 in annual operating and maintenance costs will be needed for the program, a portion of which will be offset by membership fees and private sector sponsorships. The total cost for the downcounty system stations and bikes is estimated at \$2.15 million.

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